

OCI No. 1684/67
14 December 1967

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Preliminary Assessment of Black Shield
Photography of 8 and 10 December

Summary

The Black Shield mission of 10 December provided essentially cloud-free photography of a 60-mile-square area of the northeastern corner of Cambodia and adjacent portions of South Vietnam and Laos. The photography showed that Laos Route 110 has been extended about five miles southeastward from its last observed terminus in southeast Laos into the Cambodian tri-border area, where the route divides into two branches--one continuing northeast about two miles and the other continuing south about two miles. Clearing activity beyond the ends of both branches indicates that they will be extended farther. No other evidence of Viet Cong or North Vietnamese activity in the seven specified priority search areas in northeastern Cambodia and adjacent South Vietnam was detected by either the 8 December mission or the 10 December mission.

Note: This memorandum was prepared by the Directorate of Intelligence.

1. Black Shield Mission 6738 of 10 December provided essentially cloud-free photography of a 60-mile-square area of the northeastern corner of Cambodia and adjacent portions of South Vietnam and Laos. Two passes were made over this area.

2. The photography showed that Laos Route 110 has been extended about five miles southeastward from its last observed terminus in southeast Laos into the Cambodian tri-border area, where the route divides into two branches--one continuing northeast about two miles and the other continuing south about two miles. Clearing activity beyond the ends of both branches indicates that they will be extended farther.

3. No other evidence of Viet Cong or North Vietnamese activity in the seven specified search areas in northeastern Cambodia and adjacent South Vietnam was detected by either Mission 6737 of 8 December or the 10 December mission. The 8 December mission, however, encountered about 50 percent cloud cover during its two passes over the targeted 60-mile-square area centered on northeastern Cambodia. Furthermore, the heavy tree canopy in this area makes the detection of Viet Cong or North Vietnamese activity difficult.

4. The 8 and 10 December missions also covered the entire northern and northeastern border areas of Cambodia and a portion of the panhandle areas of North Vietnam and Laos. The over-all photographic coverage of the 8 December mission was about 40 percent cloud-free. The over-all coverage of the 10 December mission was about 65 percent cloud-free. The photographed portion of North Vietnam's panhandle, however, was almost completely cloud covered by both missions.

5. Far to the west of the search in northeastern Cambodia, the 8 December mission uncovered evidence of expanded supply transshipment facilities along the Tonle Kong River in Cambodia near the Lao-tian border. Several new encampments, each containing

a few buildings, row crops, and possibly several foxholes were found. The largest of these encampments is served by numerous trails extending north to Cambodian Route 97, where a probable new storage area and water-to-road transshipment point were detected. In addition, photography of the roadbed showed increased use of Route 97 itself. All of this activity indicates a growing use of the Tonle Kong and Route 97 supply route to Communist forces in the tri-border area.

6. Well to the south of the search areas in northeastern Cambodia, the 8 December mission detected a small new probable transshipment-storage facility on the Tonle San River in Cambodia near the South Vietnamese border. The facility consists of several buildings and foxholes. This indicates that the Communists may be making increased but still moderate use of the Tonle San as a supply route.

7. Farther south in Cambodia, the 10 December mission showed a heavily used trail extending from Cambodia into the northwestern corner of Darlac Province in South Vietnam. A defensive position, consisting of a circle of foxholes and two automatic weapons positions, was observed near the trail just inside the Cambodian border.